



City of Tempe

MINUTES FOR BUILDING CODES & ENGINEERING
FOCUS GROUP STAFF MEETING

April 25, 2001
Public Works Conference Room

REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING:

George Krall	Jim Lemon
Rex Hedges	Shirley Wood
Suzan Gillstrap	Maeve Johnson
Ken Zell	Karl Fox

STAFF ATTENDING:

Scot Siegel, OTAK	Roger Millar, OTAK
Fred Brittingham	Bonnie Richardson
Grace Kelly	

1. KEY ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN A REGULATORY UPDATE

- Challenges in doing infill projects technically and trying to find a way through city processes – entitlement, site plan, documents and construction.
- We assume all departments see plans. We usually find out later that the fire department was not included in group reviews and we have to go back and redesign. There should be one point of contact for submittals, like Scottsdale does. That person routes the plans to all necessary Departments. We would like to know up front if there is a problem. Often after the 2nd or 3rd review, something new crops up, and there are delays in construction, schedules, and timing.
- If all departments could look at the proposal at the same time rather than sending it on. Planning may like a project, approve it, and then it goes to engineering and there is not enough room to do what engineering wants done. More coordination is needed in engineering and planning in the early stages and more inter-departmental coordination overall.
- Lighting should be reviewed with CPTED early on. Could save owner a month in time for electrical and lighting.
- We support citizen participation and growing smarter legislation but it needs to be well defined and clearer. Make sure communication and time lines all the way through entitlement and certificate of occupancy are well defined. We want to know what the rules are and what the expectation is. Clarity in the process is needed.
- We 'd like to see encouragement for creativity in turn for flexibility. Provide incentives and will keep the door open for innovation design. Citizen participation is an unpredictable factor. More of a challenge to do multi family. Smooth out issues related to neighborhood.
- Undesirable uses or necessary uses are difficult to site. As you go through process, how do you do that?

- Competition for ideas inter-departmentally. We need up front input on feasibility, e.g. a project can or cannot have adequate sewer service or if fiber optic cables are in the way. We want to show water and sewer lines to show it is available and works, but there is no commitment from planning staff. It is critical to know early whether it's feasible or not. We would like to have answers on technical details early on. There is lack of coordination with Engineering and Planning and lack of coordination with CPTED and Planning.
- We don't need as much light for visibility, could have lower levels. There are landscape and lighting conflicts. Picking out fixtures and re-running criteria to meet CPTED regulations costs time and money. A 1' candle requirement gets redlined if it's 9/10. Getting it resolved up front saves time.
- Question of water and wastewater planning and if it adequate for future growth/infill.

2. **WHAT WILL MAKE THIS REWRITE PROCESS A SUCCESS?**

- Valley Partnership encourages public participation includes all facets of community – citizens, staff, developers.
- More information early on and better direction from staff, for example, an Old Leon's Store was sold. New owner had to upgrade landscaping lighting and put in over \$50,000 to meet CPTED regs. They asked him to put a light pole in the middle of a railroad track is unrealistic.
- One Developer spent \$60,000 more for lighting though he didn't want to and in the end, thought it was a better project and duplicated it in Mesa.
- Multi-family industry is interested in building codes, and statewide uniformity of all codes. MAG (Maricopa Association of Governments) is looking to adopt International building code. We hope Tempe and other AZ communities also adopt this.
- CPTED, drainage, parking and refuse and fire access have been thought of by other focus groups as deal-breakers. What do you think?
- Concerned about increasing standards so much that it's hard to see profitability of product. It is difficult to accommodate all city's request: widen driveway, increase landscape on street, curb and gutter, signage, increase row, different fence treatment. It's not that development community doesn't want to do nice projects, but there's too many straws on the camel's back.
- Signage – should be creative design and enhance design. Increase visibility without being too restrictive on size.
- Apartment industry is facing a challenge to provide affordable housing. Additional city requirements/standards increase rent costs. Incentives add to desirability. Pedestrian-oriented core is unique. We have the opportunity to be innovative as the leader. Need standards and objectives with flexibility.

3. **WITH TOO MUCH FLEXIBILITY HOW DO YOU TRAIN STAFF TO GIVE AN ANSWER?**

- Staff redesigns your landscape or site plan while professionals watch as their projects are redesigned by staff.

- Tempe's technical side is not flexible and that's a good thing. Can rely on an answer.
- In same cases, a building is a corporation's logo. After Design Review, they get so far away from corporate standard, they look somewhere else.
- Education – Tempe needs to train staff to pay for lighting class for those enforcing standards and writing standards.
- Tempe has done the best job concerning lighting and light in ordinances.
- Would rather see draft document before it goes through approval process.